



*Grand Commandery of Virginia -  
Attention To Orders!<sup>1</sup>*



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<sup>1</sup> When I was at West Point, each day we had unofficial communications from the leadership at meals that began with "Attention To Orders". I stole the title for this unofficial communications channel.



*From the Apartment of the Grand Commander -  
January 2026*

Sir Knights,

Warm and fraternal greetings to each of you, wheresoever dispersed. Welcome to the ninth edition of our monthly communication from me to the Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar in Virginia and the first of the new year. I pray that this message finds each of you and your families and loved ones well and blessed.

I hope that every one of you had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of Christ with those whom you treasure the most. Two things about that...first, the birth of Christ heralds the critical step in God's plan of salvation for each of us and the very reason for our faith and for our fraternity. Second, having the opportunity to share such a special event with your loved ones is indeed a tremendous blessing. For me, I count in that number most of you, and I and Lady Luz had the opportunity to travel across the Commonwealth and celebrate with my fraters. It was great seeing you all and enjoying the fellowship and camaraderie that comes from our shared faith and vows. I cannot help but mention here our Grand Commandery celebration which took place on December 20<sup>th</sup>. It was supposed to be held at MAHOVA but unfortunately, literally two days before the event, I was advised that, in an abundance of caution, group dining there had been suspended. I made a few calls and literally, within two hours, the venue was moved to the Richmond Commandery and the command staff there had arranged for a meal, coordinated decoration, and all respondents had been informed. Further, it was the first time that we held our celebration with our brothers from the King Baldwin Grand Commandery and their Grand Commandery. This was a very memorable and meaningful event, thanks to all who made it happen and thanks to all

who were able to join us. If you were not able to join us, rest assured you were missed, but you also missed something special.

Each year, I spend the last day of the year making sure that I close any loose ends and reflecting on how the year has gone so far. That brings me to writing this newsletter to you now because, of all the things I am grateful for from 2025, my association with each of you ranks right at the top. Further, the privilege I've had and trust you have reposed in me to allow me the honor of being your Grand Commander is something that is so great that I struggle to put words around it. Thank you to each and every one of you, and I pray that the New Year provides you with blessings from God, "...good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"... Luke 6:38.

The new year will be off to the races. January 11<sup>th</sup> will see our Grand Commandery once again marching in the Religious Freedom Day Celebration in Fredericksburg, VA. The flyer is enclosed with this newsletter with all of the details, but BLUF, we kick off from the train station at about 1:30PM and march through the streets to the Religious Freedom Monument...a distance of about 1.5 miles or so. If you are unable to march, you can join us at the monument itself, scheduled to arrive at about 1:55PM and participate in the remaining festivities. I will join the Knights of Columbus in laying a wreath at the monument and a few other activities. If you have never done this, trust me when I tell you it is a great time! I really hope to see as many of you there as your cable tow will allow.

Later that same week, we conduct our Official Visit to District 9, once again, at the Fredericksburg Commandery where we will also begin the cycle of conferring the Orders of Knighthood with the Order of the Red Cross. If you have candidates in waiting for the Orders, this is a great chance to get them started, and what better venue than at Lodge 4 which, incidentally, is the Lodge where Illustrious Brother George Washington began his Masonic

journey all those years ago. As Lodge 4 is my mother lodge, I'm working on something special for that event. No promises yet, but stay tuned...😊

On the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup> of January we will have a special fund-raising event for the Knights Templar Eye Foundation in Waynesboro. How many of you have ever seen the Commander of Stevenson #8, SK Tony Daniel, without his beard? I suspect that none of us has. I doubt if his parents ever did, actually. That will change on this momentous day when Tony shaves off his beard for the first time since he was 3 years old. This, I am assured, is one of those once in a millennium events that you will not want to miss! Festivities kick off at 1230 PM, there will be hot dogs and other refreshments, cost is \$10, all proceeds going to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation.

As I have in the past, I would like to call attention to one of our charities in this newsletter. Of course we spend a lot of time and energy talking about the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, and we should. We talk a good bit about the Holy Land Pilgrimage and the Baldwin Brown Fellowship, but this month, I want to talk about the Knights Templar Educational Foundation which is managed quite capably by our own Grand Junior Warden. In summary, through this charity we provide grants to rising junior and senior college students which help them to pay for the completing of their undergraduate degrees. We do not limit these grants to students having a Masonic affiliation; the only requirements are that they be United States citizens attending an accredited four-year institution. While, of course, we love supporting our Masonic family, this allows us to extend our reach beyond our Masonic family and into the community at large.

Applicants are evaluated on their academic achievements and community involvement since beginning their collegiate journey. Their initiative in applying shows maturity and valuable life skills which will be invaluable as they make their way in life.

My request to you this month is for two things. First, I ask that you join me in supporting this very valuable endeavor by promoting this opportunity in all settings in which we find ourselves, Masonic or otherwise. We reach far and wide, and if we could have every Commandery make the effort to have just one applicant, and then if only half of those that we have reached apply for this grant, we will have 13 applicants. This would improve the competitiveness of our grant and ensure that we are rewarding the best of the best. Currently, we fund five grants each year. Grant applications can be found at [www.vatemplars.com](http://www.vatemplars.com), and are due to the Grand Recorder on Friday, March 13, 2026.

My second request is, of course, that we each donate to this worthy cause. This is truly a gift that continues to give. We influence young people by giving them a helpful boost in their studies while, at the same time, showing that charity of heart and action that sets us apart as Christian Knights of the Temple. Every one of us has needed a bit of a helping hand, and what better chance to show charity than to give when there is no expectation of remuneration. Your check to the Grand Commandery of Virginia designated for the “Educational Foundation” in the memo line will be sent to the fund manager at the Grand Encampment.

One other thing I want to bring to your attention...do you know of a SK who has done amazing service to our fraternity and to the York Rite bodies in general? If so, why not nominate him for the Knight Templar Cross of Honor (KTCH)? This is our highest honor and we get to award only one in the course of a chivalric year. Take a look at our web site for details and put in that nomination. I’m setting a deadline for January 31, 2026 for nominations to be in to the committee.

It has become tradition that I end these messages with a mention of our videos at youtube.com. Congratulations! We are over 1K views! Allow me to once again commend it to your viewing pleasure.

<https://youtu.be/pGB4PBXVJLY>. Also, while you’re there, you may also

see our Christmas video. While the “holiday” is over for a time, the message is eternal. It’s located here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O19Rsf1Vzms>. And, while I’m on a roll, a video montage of pictures from our joint conclave with the King Baldwin guys at West Point is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmQvTDo-2R8>. Our IT team has been doing an amazing job, I simply cannot commend them enough. Take a look at their work and tell me what you think.

Ok. That’s all for now. Busy month of January coming up. I hope to see most of you in our travels. God bless, keep, and protect you and yours!

Yours In Christian and Knightly Courtesy,

Bill



WILLIAM SEARCY, III. KCT.  
*Grand Commander 2025-2026*

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*Grand Commandery of Virginia  
2025 - 2026 Leadership Team*



From L to R:

- SK William Jonathan Sirman, DDGC, District 1
- SK Brian Dean Joos, DDGC, District 2
- SK Timothy Anderson Dahlman, DDGC, District 3
- SK Daniel James Carter, DDGC, District 4
- SK William (Bill) Searcy, REGC
- SK Eric Dale Swortzel, DDGC, District 5
- SK Mark Ronald Day, DDGC, District 6
- SK William Arthur Crosscup, V, DDGC, District 7
- SK Joseph Brandon Hale, DDGC, District 8
- SK Paul William Lockhart, DDGC, District 9

Proverbs 16:9 - A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

**2026**



# **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY CELEBRATION**

**Sunday January 11, 2026**

**Religious Freedom Monument of Fredericksburg**

Please Join the Grand Commandery as we march in faith to  
recognize this important celebration.

## Schedule of Events

- 12:45 Assemble at Fredericksburg Train Station
- 1:15 Dignitaries gather at Saint John Bosco Center, Catholic Campus Ministry, University of Mary Washington
- 1:30 Parade Begins
- 1:40 Dignitaries depart for Religious Freedom Monument
- 1:50 Dignitaries arrive at the Religious Freedom Monument on Washington Avenue
- 1:55 Parade arrives at Religious Freedom Monument
- 2:00 Ceremony Begins
- 3:00 Catholic Campus Ministry, University of Mary Washington Reception for Knights of Columbus and Invited Guests at Saint John Bosco, Center
- 4:00 Conclusion

**VISIT [WWW.VATEMPLARS.ORG](http://WWW.VATEMPLARS.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION**



*UPCOMING EVENTS - January 2026*

- 11 Religious Freedom Day Parade – Fredericksburg, VA
- 17 District 9 Official Visit
  - Fredericksburg No. 1
    - Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4
    - 803 Princess Anne Street Fredericksburg, VA
  - DDGC: Paul William Lockhart
    - Cell: 540 -272 -7248
    - Email: paul [lockhart@comcast.net](mailto:paul_lockhart@comcast.net)
    - Email: ddgc [-d9@vatemplars.com](mailto:ddgc_d9@vatemplars.com)
  - Illustrious Order of the Red Cross
- 24 – The Shaving of “The Beard”
  - Stevenson Commandery No. 8

- Lee Lodge No. 208 1600 West Main Street Waynesboro, VA
- Tony Daniel gets shorn, 12:30 PM – Benefit to KTEF